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S E C R E T MANAMA 000811

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EFIN](#) [KTFN](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON AL QUDS INSTITUTION CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 101562

Classified by Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

1. (S) The Ambassador June 4 delivered reftel demarche concerning the Al Quds Institution conference in Bahrain to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs/Information Minister Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar, following up on a previous conversation June 1 about the issue. Abdul Ghaffar said it could be very embarrassing to both Bahrain and the United States to block a conference aimed at talking about Jerusalem after it had already been scheduled and announced. He said he would look into the matter and get back to the Ambassador. (Note: He is currently in Cairo for an Information Ministers meeting. End Note.)

2. (S) The Ambassador June 7 delivered the same demarche to Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, who was well-briefed on the issue. Noting that he had played no role in allowing the conference to be held in Bahrain, the Minister said that Jerusalem is a "very dear holy place" to all Muslims and no government in the Islamic world would refuse a request for people to speak about Jerusalem in a peaceful manner. He said the GOB would monitor the conference to ensure there was not talk about violence or terrorism. Shaikh Mohammed said that to cancel the conference now would backfire, inflaming public opinion against the United States to the benefit of the extremists.

3. (S) The Ambassador pushed back hard, saying that at this time of promise in the Middle East, Bahrain should be embracing Mahmoud Abbas and the moderates. Allowing rejectionists to hold a conference in Bahrain sends the wrong signal. Shaikh Mohammed said that Bahrain was already in touch with Abbas about visiting Bahrain, and the two sides would try to pin down a date after the G-77/China meeting in Doha June 14. He requested that we not exaggerate the importance of the Al Quds Institution conference, asking that we view it as a meeting of intellectuals talking about Jerusalem and nothing more.

MONROE